

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A piston-cylinder unit comprising:
  - a cylindrical pressure tube having an end with an end face surrounding a central opening[[;]],said cylindrical pressure tube being formed at said end to form an end wall, said end face facing radially inward to define said central opening;
    - a piston rod extending through said central opening[[; and]] and forming a ring-shaped gap between said piston rod and said end face; and
      - a heat-shrink sleeve surrounding said pressure tube and extending axially into said ring-shaped gap, enclosing said end face.
  2. (cancelled)
  3. (currently amended) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim [[2]] 1 wherein said sleeve surrounds and is axially supported by the radially inward facing end wall.
  4. (currently amended) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim [[2]] 1 further comprising a piston rod guiding and sealing unit received in said cylindrical pressure tube toward said end wall, said piston rod being axially movable through said unit, said guiding and sealing unit comprising an end ring which is enclosed by said end wall.
  5. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 4 wherein said end ring comprises an annular channel surrounding said rod and facing said ring-shaped gap.
  6. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 5 wherein said annular channel has a radially outer cylindrical wall with a diameter, the central opening of the end wall

having a diameter which is greater than or equal to the diameter of the radially outer cylindrical wall of the annular channel.

7. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 5 wherein said annular channel has a radially outer cylindrical wall with a diameter, the central opening of the end wall having a diameter which is less than the diameter of the radially outer cylindrical wall of the annular channel.

8. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 5 wherein the heat-shrink sleeve extends into the annular channel.

9. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 7 wherein the heat-shrink sleeve extends into the annular channel and overlaps a portion of the end wall extending over the annular channel.

10. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 5 wherein the annular channel has a radially extending bottom, said sleeve resting against said bottom and extending toward the piston rod.

11. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 10 wherein said sleeve has a free end which rests against the piston rod.

12. (original) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 10 wherein said sleeve has an end which encloses the piston rod in a tubular manner.

13. (currently amended) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim [[2]] 1 wherein said cylindrical pressure tube comprises a cylindrical part and a rounded transition between said cylindrical part and said end wall.

14. (New) A piston-cylinder unit comprising:

a cylindrical pressure tube formed with a radially inward extending end wall surrounding a central opening;

a piston rod extending through said central opening and forming an annular gap between the piston rod and the end wall;

a heat shrink sleeve surrounding the pressure tube and extending over said end wall and into said annular gap; and

an end ring received in said in said cylindrical pressure tube toward said end wall, said piston rod being axially movable through said end ring, said end ring having an annular channel surrounding said rod and facing said annular gap, said sleeve extending into said annular channel.

15. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 14 wherein said annular channel has a radially outer cylindrical wall with a diameter, the central opening of the end wall having a diameter which is greater than or equal to the diameter of the radially outer cylindrical wall of the annular channel.

16. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 14 wherein said annular channel has a radially outer cylindrical wall with a diameter, the central opening of the end wall having a

diameter which is less than the diameter of the radially outer cylindrical wall of the annular channel.

17. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 16 wherein the heat-shrink sleeve extends into the annular channel and overlaps a portion of the end wall extending over the annular channel.

18. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 14 wherein the annular channel has a radially extending bottom, said sleeve resting against said bottom and extending toward the piston rod.

19. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 18 wherein said sleeve has a free end which rests against the piston rod.

20. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 18 wherein said sleeve has an end which encloses the piston rod in a tubular manner.

21. (New) A piston-cylinder unit as in claim 14 wherein said cylindrical pressure tube comprises a cylindrical part and a rounded transition between said cylindrical part and said end wall.